

A TRUE  
REPRESENTATION  
OF  
PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT :

Wherein a short and clear Account is given of the

PRINCIPLES  
Of them that own it.  
COMMON OBJECTIONS  
AGAINST IT  
ANSWERED.

AND

Some other things Opened, that concern  
it in the Present Circumstances.

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*By a Friend to that Interest.*

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Licens'd according to Order.

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# A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF Presbyterian Government.

**T**HAT any of the Truths or Ordinances of God should need an Apology to be made for them, should be for a Lamentation: For it proceedeth either from the Ignorance or Perverseness of

Men. The Principles and way of *Presbyterianism*, have undergone the common Fate of other of the parts of that Religion that Christ hath taught: It is the Sect every where spoken against; and there hath been no small stir about that way: And this hath proceeded partly from the enmity against that curb of Mens Lusts, and Enormities that is in ungodly Men: And partly, from want of knowledge of that way, which even they may be under, whose Studies and thoughts are employed about things of another nature, and not about these matters, though they be otherwise knowing and thinking Men: Or from prejudice that their Interest may fill them with, to the hiding of Truth in this, from their Eyes; wherefore, we think it our Duty to endeavour the vindication of this our Profession, (with as much brevity and clearness as we can attain) by First giving up a plain account of what we hold.

*Secondly*, Taking off the most material Objections, and these that are most common, or reproaches that are used against us; for we have to do not only with Men otherwise Sober and Judicious, who differ from us: But with many whose Temper, Practices and Designs, are not such as becometh the Gospel. We desire as to approve ourselves to our Blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ; to satisfy the minds of all inquirers after Truth, but especially to stand right in the Opini-

on of His Majesty, our Gracious Sovereign, of his Grace the King's High Commissioner, and of the Noble and Honourable Estates of Parliament; who we hope, as Nurfing Fathers to the Church, will own us in those ways that the Lord owneth us in.

Our Principles we lay down in a few Propositions. *First*, We own Christ the Mediator, as the only Head over, and Law-giver to his Church; and we disown any visible Governing Head over the Church, however pretending to act in Subordination to him: Because we know none that he hath given such Commission to.

*Secondly*. Christ as Head of the Church, hath given forth Laws, whereby the Affairs of his House should be managed; and hath not left any *Nomothetick* Power in the Church to make Laws for Her self, (Her work being to declare and execute the Laws of Christ) and the Laws of the Magistrate are not to appoint new Ordinances, or Officers in the Church; though he ought to give his Civil Sanction to what Christ hath appointed; and may make Laws about those things that are External to the Church, that is, which are common to her with other Societies.

*Thirdly*. Christ hath appointed Officers in his House, and declared how they should be Qualified, and what should be their work: As in the beginning of the Gospel, he was pleased to appoint several extraordinary and temporary Officers, that were Immediately Called and extraordinarily Gifted by himself, as *Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists*, &c. The Apostles by Divine direction, did immediately choose some by themselves

for itinerant work, ( either from amongst the ordinary, or extraordinary Officers of the Church ) to exercise *hic & nunc*, their extraordinary Power; ( which Officers we commonly call *Evangelists* ) so we do not find that he appointed any ordinary and perpetual Officers, except Elders, ( called also Bishops ) and Deacons, *Phil.* 1. 1. Of these Elders, some were to rule the Church, and also to Teach her, *Heb.* 13. 7. 17. Others only to Rule, *1 Tim.* 5. 17. Which also was the practice of the first Antiquity, and its desuetude complained of by *Ambrose* in the end of the fourth Century: And there are few of the Fathers in the first three Centuries, but they mention *Seniores Ecclesie*, that represented the People in the Government of the Church with the Ministers.

*Fourthly.* How the Officers of God's House should be qualified, is at length set down, *1 Tim.* 3. 2. under the name of Bishops, ( which was the name of all Church Rulers ) and Deacons, and *Tit.* 1. 6.

*Fifthly.* Their work is fully set down, both negatively, that they should not be entangled with Worldly Affairs, *2 Tim.* 2. where having mentioned Ordination of Ministers, *verse* 2. he requirerh them *verse* 3. and 4. as Souldiers to endure hardness, and to be abstracted from Worldly Business; which is to be understood, as much as their necessity doth permit. Also positively it is told us in general, that they are directed in this, *1 Tim.* 3. 14. 15. and particular Directions are given about Preaching, and that in all the parts of it, *2 Tim.* 4. 1, 2. Censures, *1 Cor.* 5. 4, 5. *2 Thess.* 3. 14. Ordination, *2 Tim.* 2. 2. *1 Tim.* 5. 22.

*Sixthly.* In all these, Ministers and Elders have no Lordly Authority over the People, but must act as Christ's Servants, and theirs, ( in order to their Salvation ) *1 Pet.* 5. 3. *2 Cor.* 4. 5. yet they have real and proper ( though Ministerial ) Authority under Christ.

*Seventhly.* It is not only of Divine Authority natural, that there be a Government in the Church, ( Anarchy and Confusion in any Society, being contrary to the Dictates of natural Reason ) but the Lord Jesus hath positively revealed his will in this: He having expressly committed the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to his Servants, and that for Binding and Loosing; retaining and remitting of Sins: The Authoritative inflicting of Censures, whereby the man is declared to be free from guilt, and that his Sin is Pardoned so far as men can discern.

*Eighthly.* What should be the species of this Government is not left indifferent to Men, ( whether the Magistrate or the Church ) to chuse, but is determined by Christ, and revealed in the *New Testament*: In that hath appointed what Officers should be in his House, how they should be chosen and Authorized, viz. by Election and Ordination: What should be their Qualifications and Work: How they should manage their Work, and rule the Church in common: That the Apostles committed the Ordination of Ministers to the *Presbytery*, *1 Tim.* 4. 14. and the Censures of the Church, to a Community, *1 Cor.* 5. 2 *Cor.* 2. And not to one Person, even in their own time, is an unanswerable Argument for this; their Example being declarative of the mind of God, where no peculiar reason appeareth for their Action.

*Ninthly.* This Government the Lord hath not committed to Magistrates, who have no power to Ordain, nor Deprive Ministers, or Elders; nor to Excommunicate, or relax from that Sentence: Nor to Administer, or manage any part of that Work that is peculiar to the Church. as it is a Religious Society, nor to appoint how the Church should be Governed: But he hath committed it to the Church Guides; Ministers and Ruling Elders; for to them are all the Directions about it given in the Word, not to the Magistrates; they are to give an account of it, *Heb.* 13. 7. They did manage it for divers hundreds of years, when there was no Magistrate that did own, or Countenance Christianity: And there is no hint in Scripture, nor principle of reason that can evince, that this Power should devolve into the hands of the Magistrate, when he should become Christian; neither are any Directions given to the Magistrate how he should administer any of the Ordinances of Christ.

*Tenthly.* Yet we own the Civil Magistrate as Nursing Father of the Church, and *Custos urbis; tabula legis*, upon which account he is not only to provide *Taxibus* for the Church, and to procure her Peace and Unity by all good Means, ( as repressing of Heresie, Schism, and other Disorders; wherein he is to use a judgment of Discretion, and not blindly to execute the Sentence of the Church ) but also may require all the Officers and Members of the Church to do what is their Duty: And that he may ( when the Case requireth ) Convocate Synods and Indict times of Fasting and Thanksgiving: Though for these we assert an intrinsic Power in the Church, to which that of the Magistrate is not privative, but cumulative:



lative: For we maintain a twofold Kingdom of Christ, one, as God over all men, in which the Magistrate is his Vicegerent; another as Mediator over the Church, as such, in which he hath Deputed no Magistral, but only Ministerial Power: We hold also, that the Persons and Actions of Church-men, are subject to the Civil Magistrate, and that they may be punish'd when they transgress the Laws.

*Eleventhly.* This Ministeriel Governing Power in the Church, the Lord hath not committed to all the Members; nor to all the Males thereof: But hath made a manifest distinction between Rulers and Ruled, in the Scriptures mentioned already.

*Twelfthly.* The Lord hath equally intrusted all his Servants the Ministers, not only with the power of dispensing the Word and Sacraments, but also with the power of Governing the Church: Which by his appointment, and according to the practice of the first and best Ages of the Churches, ought to be, and was done in common, by Ministers Acting in Parity, and not by a single Prelate set over the rest. This is acknowledged by most, and the most eminent of our Prelatick Brethren: And must be so by all of them who do not plead for a Divine Right of *Episcopacy*. Besides that, neither Names, Directions, or Reproofs given to Church Guides in Scripture, do import any such imparity of Power, nor is there any footstep of the Exercise of it in Scripture; to infer this disparity of Power from that of the *Apostles*, is most inconsequential: They being Universal, Extraordinary, Unfixed and Temporary Officers, whom the Lord immediately called, and abrogated their Office with their Death; in that he neither called others to Succeed in that Power, nor gave any hint that it should be done by the Church. It is as if one should say, the Church was once governed Monarchically by a Visible Head, (*viz.* whilst Christ was on Earth) *Ergo*, it should be so still: Which no Protestant will aver. The Argument in *Timothy* and *Titus* is of the same Kidney, they being extraordinary and unfixed Officers, and so no precedent for after times. Neither can any Argument be drawn from the Angels of the Churches; words not being often used properly in that Mystical Book; and we know that *Theologia Symbolicæ canon, est Argumentativa*. Besides that, the Angel of *Thyatira* was certainly a Community, being spoken to in the Plural Number, *Rev. 2. 24. Τῷ ἁγίῳ, καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς*.

*Thirteenthly.* There being no disparity of Power amongst Ministers, by Christ's grant of Power to them: No man can make this disparity by set-

ting one over the Rest: Neither can they devolve their Power on One of themselves. For Christ hath given no such Warrant to Men to dispose of his Ordinances as they see fit. And Power being delegated to them by him, they cannot so commit it to another to exercise it for them, as to deprive themselves of it. Also, it being not a *License* only, but a *Trust*, of which they must give an account, they must perform the work by themselves, as they will be Answerable. But we must contract, not being now disputing, but asserting what we shall be ready to defend as occasion shall be offered.

*Fourteenthly.* We assert Presbyterian Government to be so of Divine Right as we can make no composition with Men about it, (though none shall be more condescending to them that are otherwise minded in what is consistent with Truth and necessary Duty, than we. Yet it is not alike so in all the parts of it: For some parts of it are of Christ's Institution; as the Officers of the Church, the Laws and Censures of it. And others of the dictates of natural Reason, (which is also a Beam of Divine Light) as that there be a Government and meeting for managing of it; that one preside in them; that lesser and greater parts of the Church had their Meetings; as Congregational, Clerical, Provincial, and National Assemblies, for Government; That there be a Subordination and Appeals amongst these. To require positive Assertions of Scripture warranting every one of these, (though there want not Scripture Examples and other hints to countenance several of them) is as unreasonable, as if we should be called to bring a Text to prove that we should come into the publick Assemblies Cloathed and not Naked; in an usual and not in an antique Garb.

*Fifteenthly.* Whether the Moderator, or *Πρόεδρος* of ruling Church Meetings should continue for one or more Days or for how long a time is not determined by any Institution of Christ, nor by any general dictate of natural Light: Yet we judge a constant Mediator highly inconvenient, and by all means to be shunned: For if he be imposed on the meeting, it is an encroachment on their intrinsic power of Governing themselves in such things as are peculiar to them. And though chosen by themselves, fatal, and constant Examples together with the inclinations of Men to usurpation, do shew it to have so violent tendency to Lordly Prelacy, as rarely doth it fail of the bad effects, nor can be expected, not to issue in it.

We

We maintain, that no Church Judicature ought to cognosce of Affairs of State, nor of Mens Civil Rights, or Interests, except their advice should be sought by the Magistrate concerning Sin or Duty in any such matter: As if the thing be manifestly Scandalous, and evidently dangerous to the Interest of Religion and the Souls of Men. Neither do they inflict any punishment, save Spiritual Censures. Their work is to enquire into and declare controverted Truths; to Censure scandalous Sinners; to try and Ordain Ministers; to absolve the Penitent, by applying the comforts of the Gospel unto them, and such like: Wherefore there is no ground of fear that they should Clash, or Cope with the Magistrate, unless they go beyond their Line; in which case they fall under the Magistrates coercive power.

*Sixteenthly.* The way how men come into any Office or Power in the Church, is by Election of the People, which designeth the Person, (in which Election as in other things, they are to be under the Conduct and regulation of the Church Guides) and Ordination, by laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, which is meane of communicating Authority to him; and the former of these ought to precede the latter; For we find no Warrant for a *Ministerium Vagum* in the Church, seeing even in times of trouble and great Persecution, we read of none ordained by the Apostles, but *αὐτ' ἐκκλησίαι* and *ἡ τε πλὴν* with the Suffrages of the People.

*Seventeenthly.* Though superintendency, that is a power of inspection delegated from the Church to one, used in case of necessity when a qualified Minister could hardly be had in a Province: He might in a time be appointed to oversee them who could do little more then read the word publicly, that is no Warrant for bringing qualified Ministers under that Subjection in a Constituted Church, where there are (through the mercy of God) competent number of Ministers.

If our Principle be rightly understood, we confidently hope they will suggest grounds of answer, for most of the Objections made against us, to the minds of the intelligent and unbiassed: Yet we shall endeavour to afford some farther light this way also.

1. It is objected (or rather we are reproached with) by some, that Presbyterian Church Government is inconsistent with civil Government. *Answer.* 1. A simple denial is enough to stop the mouth of such bold Asserters: Neither hath the World yet seen any topick (except calumnies) whereby this could be pretended to be proved.

2. Experience proveth the contrary, Civil Government is advantageously managed in several of the most eminent of the reformed Churches, with that discipline of Christs House that we plead for. And our own Land is a confounding instance that might stop the mouth of impudence it self; where in Presbytery commenced with the Reformation from Popery, and continued with much Peace, till ambitious Men by labouring to unsettle it, did disturb, and at last overturn the State. 3. We have already shewed how we give to *Cæsar* that which is *Cæsar's*: And to God that which is Gods; neither can our adversaries make any power appear to be due to the Magistrate, but what we allow him: Indeed *Erasmians* do require for the Majestrate, some Power that the Presbyterians cannot approve of: But this is not peculiar to us, but common to all that assert a Government in the Church, distinct from that of the State: Which is the principle of *Papists*, *Prelatists* (that are only such) and *Independents*, as well as it is ours. 4. Our obedience to Magistrates in all their Lawful commands, and our peaceful sufferings of unjust violence are nortour to all that can behold us with an unprejudiced Eye. And if instances can be given to the contrary, the disloyalty of some is not to be imputed to all (for what party of Men hath not afforded such instances) and where the peace was broken by Men of our way (which were but a few) it was the fruit of such insupportable Severities and Hardships, as even they could have born who blame others for that practice: As late Instances do make manifest.

2. It is next objected that Presbytery and Monarchy are inconsistent, *No Bishop is King*; at least it is not so adapted to Monarchy as Prelacy is; and the Government of the Church should be so moulded as it may best sute that of the State. *Answer.* 1. The falsehood of the Assertion, and maxim, is evident from what hath been said: Presbytery and Monarchy have well consisted in our own Land, and in *France*. 2. None maintain more Loyal Principles towards Kings then Presbyterians do, who think themselves obliged to Fear God and Honour the King: And were always ready to obey him in the Lord. 'Tis true they cannot give him unlimited Obedience: But this is not as they are: Presbyterians, but as they are Men of Conscience, and will obey God rather than Man, which hope the Objecters will not say is peculiar to Presbyterians, If they do, and plead for the publick Conscience (as some of them have done) to the lying aside the use of particular Consciences in the Actions that are moral, (which

is to introduce practical Atheism ) They do not hurt our cause but their own. 3. Our practice hath also been Loyal in abhorring the Murder of King Charles the first, and in contributing the most effectual endeavours to restore His Son : And in owning and submitting to a King of a contrary Religion, so long as our Religion and Liberties were in any tolerable safety ; or the Laws that were the measure of our Obedience were any way regarded ; and what was then done, was not by us alone. 4. It is boldly alledged but not proved, that the Church Government should be fram'd according to that of the State, for that may be various, but this is one : And was so under the Old Testament, though the Civil Government varied.

3. 'Tis said that Presbyterians encroach on the Authority of the Magistrate, by meddling with State Affairs. *Ans.* 1. Our Principle in this is already declared. And whatever Instance; of former times, this Allegation may seem to be built on, had their rise from Statesmen, taking the advice of Church Men in their assemblies: Who sometimes gave advice contrary to the inclination of the leading Men of the State: And if their zeal for good Interest led them at any time to press their advice with Reasons and Threatnings from the word of God: And in some excess did happen this way, the blame lay on them who gave the first rise to it. Besides this, when the actings of Rulers have a manifest and direct tendency to lead People into sinful Courses, such as imposing of unlawful Oaths, and engaging People in a false Religion ) who could be silent without unfaithfulness to God, and cruelty both to the Souls of Rulers and People? Another Answer may be, by retorting this Argument on the Prelatical Clergy: Do not Bishops sit in the Councils, and interpose directly and formally in Affairs of State, which Presbyterians never pretended to.

4. The rigidity of Presbyterians is objected. 1. Can any Man have the brow to compare the rigidity of Presbyterians, with that of either *Papists*, or *Prelatists*, either in bearing with no Dissent from their way, even in the least matters, and which themselves count Indifferent, or in the Bloody and cruel way of Persecuting such as Dissent; by Massacres, Inquisitions, horrid Tortures and Imprisonment, Finings, and strange Severities. Is there any thing that can be alledged against Presbyterians that can be once compared with the Persecutions that many in the West of Scotland, and elsewhere, have endured? Yea, *Independents* cannot compare with the Moderation

of Presbyterians; for they, (most of them) will not Communicate with any but of their own way; and so with none but those of their own Congregation; which is far from our way. As for *Anabaptists* and *Quakers*, they own none for Members of the Church, but Men of their own Stamp: So that it may be on good grounds said, That Presbyterians are the most Moderate of any party that pretend to Religion. 2. That which Men call Rigidity in Presbyterians, is mostly against Men's Immoralities, that are unquestionably such: If other men be gentle to these, it may recommend them to wicked Mens good liking, but will not render them acceptable to God: This strictness of Discipline against scandalous Sins, is enjoined in Scripture, and we go not beyond the bounds there set; we rebuke such before all; we do not punish them in their Bodies or Purses; and our strictness falleth very short of that of the Primitive times; as every one who hath read any thing of the History of the Ancient Church, knoweth, both their *Catechumens* were detained from Church privileges; and their *Penitents* put to long and hard Penance, at another rate than any thing that we do. 3. Wherein lyeth the Rigidity of our Discipline? Do not our Ministers deal with them who fall into scandalous sins with all Meekness and Tenderness, admonishing them, laying before them the Evil and Danger of their way, the necessity of Repentance, the hope of Mercy through Christ that there is to the Penitent. It is our way, even where the Sinner is most obstinate and rejecteth all Advice, to wait for many weeks before we proceed to Excommunication, that that dreadful Sentence, if possible may be prevented. We give publick Admonition three several Lord's days, and sometimes oftener: We pour our prayers to God, not only in Secret, but with the Congregation as long; that the Sinner may be turned from his evil way: And after all this, we use to wait patiently for the Man's Repentance: If he appear penitent, the Sentence doth not pass against him; and after Sentence is past upon the hardened Sinner, if afterward he shew any signs of Repentance, how readily is he received into the Church again, and we cheerfully confirm our love to him; and where Church Censures are used, it is not for Worldly matters, (not paying Church dues, as is the practice of some others) not for small offences, but for Gross and Scandalous Sins. 4. For their severity toward such as differ from them in principles, they think it their duty not to bear them that are Evil, and to try them that

say they they are *Apostles*, and are not; they have a zeal against Error, Disorders, and Usurpations in the Church, and cannot understand how they who do not own *Presbyterial* Government, should be the managers of it: Yet can use that Moderation (and resolve to do so when opportunity shall be put in their hand) as not to deny Church Communion to any Sober and Religious Person, though of a contrary sentiment to them, in these inferior points of Truth.

5. Another Objection is from the Indiscretion of the present Ministers of this way: Their want of Learning, Prudence, and other good Parts, that may fit them to manage so great a Trust, as is the Government of the Church. *Ans.* We know these are the diminutive thoughts that our Adversaries have of us: And we have not such high Thoughts of our selves, as to magnifie our selves: We have cause to be humbled, (as we hope we are, in some measure) for our imperfections both in Gifts and Graces: Yet we may, and must (being thus put to it) say, that there want not Men amongst us, who fall not short of Ministerial Qualifications, of them who have lately had the Rule of the Church; and for the generality of us, it is the Opinion of the World, and of un-biassed Men; (yea. even of some, that are not of our way) that these of the other party have no cause in their Glorifying over us in this. 2. Church Government doth not require any great degree of Politick Accomplishment: A plain man who understandeth the Laws of Christ, and the Scripture Directions concerning Censures, is fitter to Govern the Church, than a great States-man is. 3. Any Indiscretion that of late years hath appeared in our Conduct, may and should be imputed to our want of liberty to govern the Church; every one (among Ministers and People) did what was right in his own Eyes; and we do not deny, but there are some Indiscreet Persons among us, as there are in all Parties: And even wise Men in our Circumstances, could not shun some Acts that might seem Indiscreet, either to Adversaries, or to less considering Persons.

6. The Divisions of *Presbyterians* are objected. *Ans.* 1. Where are these not to be found? Neither Bishop nor Pope have been able to keep them out of the Church, or from among their own Party. 2. Our Divisions we do not deny, or approve; we are Men of like Passions with others: we labour to shun Divisions as much as is possible, and through Grace, are come to more Unity than they who reproach us with Divisions. 3. The Divisions that were among us, as we de-

ny not that our Mistakes and Corruptions had a hand in them, so we know that Enemies were active to promote and heighten them: Which though it excuse not us *a toto*, yet it doth *a tanto*, and puts our Enemies in *mala fide*, to reproach us with them. 4. The Unity that the Prelatick party made in the Church, was like that of a Conquering Tyrant, who beholdeth all those that oppose him, slain before him; there was Peace to the King and *Haman*, when there was none to the People of God; the Unity of some, is a Combination in Error, and the result of a Conquest over Mens Consciences, that now dare not muster against the Lust of their imposing Task-masters: We think contending for Truth, more desirable than such Peace. It is known that our Church enjoyed such Unity for many years after the Reformation as was Celebrated by Churches Abroad, as is evident from the Preface to *Corpus Confessionum*, till ambitious men began to trouble her with their Innovations, and Usurpations, and so were the cause of Division.

7. Many Object, that if *Presbyterians* get Power, they will force all to make publick Repentance who have owned *Bishops*, taken the *Test*, or other Oaths that they dislike. *Ans.* Our principle is that, that publick Scandals ought to be publickly rebuked; yet there are Cases in which the strictness of Discipline in this matter, may and must be relaxed: I shall name two. 1. When the matter of Offence is controverted, and the sinful Practice is from the mis-information of the Conscience; where the matter is not of the highest moment, and the Person appeareth Conscieniously to follow his Light, Church Discipline may then be forborn. 2. When the fault is universal, either the whole, or the greater part, or great part of the Church is guilty; the rigour of Censure (that otherwise might be due) is to be abated; even the Primitive Church, though very severe in Discipline, used a great *Epistola* in this case: When many or most had fallen in Persecution; though the Crime was of the highest nature, even denying the Faith. A general Humiliation of the whole Church, may be instead of a particular application of Censures; I hope there is no cause of fear from men of such moderate Principles. If in this or any thing else, we have been chargeable with Excess, as who can clear himself from all blame, I hope our ripe Thoughts, Studies, and Sufferings, (by the Blessing of God on them) hath taught us, and will engage us, to let our Moderation be known to all Men; considering that the Lord is at hand: And



and though we have been severely Beaten by our fellow-Servants, yet we will stand in awe, and the loath that the Lord, when he cometh, should find us so doing to them.

8. Some Object, That in this way Ministers may Domineer over People, even the greatest Men, at their Pleasure. *Ans.* Beside that they must walk by the Rule set down in the Word; and if they exceed that bounds they may be cured by Superior Judicatories: Or if their Insolence amount to the disturbing of the Peace, the Magistrate may restrain them. We say, beside this the Ministers do nothing alone, but with the Peoples Representatives, the Elders, who may be of the Nobles or any other Rank, as they are qualified for that Work, and chosen to it by the Church.

Some other Objections are tossed among Men but talk of these things, which do not so much concern *Presbyterial Government* in general, as some parts of it, or things about it, that are now in agitation. The 9th. Objection may be framed against the taking away the Election of Ministers by Patrons, *viz.* That if that be done, men of Note and Interest in Parishes, may be over-ruled by the Multitude, (which often is ignorant and heady) and have Ministers imposed on them. *Ans.* 1. that Patronages are an intolerable Grievance, and yoke of Bondage on the Church, and have always been the cause of Pestering the Church with a bad Ministry; and a temptation to Intants please the Patron, (farther than to his Edification) rather than to please God: Beside the Simonical buying and Selling of Gospel Ordinances, that frequently and in all times have attended this Service of Men: But (which is worst of all) that it is a direct crossing Christi's Institution, and a robbing his People of the privilege he hath bequeathed to them. These things I say, are fully proved elsewhere. And therefore, if it be supposed that the Inconveniencies mentioned should follow from taking away of Patronages, yet it will not (I hope) move them who regard Christi's Institutions, or the good of his Church, the Salvation and Edification of Souls, to be for their continuance. 2. The same inconvenience was apt to fall on popular Election in other Ages of the Church; and yet in the Apostles times, and in the first and best Ages, till the seventh or eighth Century, or later, Patronages were not settled in the Church; they came in amongst the latest Antichristian Corruptions and Usurpations; The Primitive Christians were not so tender of their Grandeur, and such privileges as their Rank in

the World gave them; nor so little tender of the Liberties of the Church, and the Interest of Christians, as such. And if any such pretensions appeared to be owned by the Grandees of these times, they met with a severe Check, and that in lesser matters than acclaiming a power of choosing Ministers for the Whole Church; as appeareth by the *Apostle's* reprovng the Distinction in the Seats in their Assemblies, that was made between the Man with the good King and gay Cloathing, and the Man in Vile Raiment. We are content to allow Great Men all due respect, but not to compliment them with what is Christi's Legacy to his People. And therefore we hope that they who are willing to subject themselves to the Laws of Christi, will be content to stand on equal Ground (though we be far from aiming at the Leveling principle in other things) with their poor Brethren in the Church, with respect to Church privileges, which belong not to Men as Poor or Rich, as Great or Small; but as they are Christi's Disciples. 3. It is carefully to be observed, that the Election of a Minister is not ty to be left to the management of the confused Rabble, (though the meanest adult Male Member of the Church hath a right to assent or dissent) but it is to be ordered by Eldership, and that under the inspection of the Presbytery, (and by the *Presbytery* where no Congregational Elderships is) in the number of which Elders it is to be supposed, that Heretors and Men of Interest in the Paroch will be, if they be tolerably qualified for, and will undertake such an Office, and then they have a special hand in the Election, and cannot complain of being imposed upon: And the Eldership is to exclude from having an hand in the Election, them that are Scandalous, grossly Ignorant, Heady, and Schismatick, or any way disorderly. And if Divisions fall in, the Elders are Judges of the Difference between the two Parties; and are to consider the reasons on both hands, and to ponder and weigh, as well as to the number of Votes. They ought also to exclude from Voting all such as are not fixed Members of the Congregation. And to lay more weight on the Suffrages of them that are fixed, and less on them that are otherwise, *ceteris paribus*. For though Christianity maketh one a Member of the Church Catholick, yet a fixed abode is needful to make one a Member of, and to give a share in the privileges of that particular Flock. But how to limit this Fixation is not easie: For though some be manifestly unfixed as Servants; and others are manifestly fixed, as ancient Inhabi-

say they they are *Apostles*, and are not; they have a zeal against Error, Disorders, and Usurpations in the Church, and cannot understand how they who do not own *Presbyterial* Government, should be the managers of it: Yet can use that Moderation (and resolve to do so when opportunity shall be put in their hand) as not to deny Church Communion to any Sober and Religious Person, though of a contrary sentiment to them, in these inferior points of Truth.

5. Another Objection is from the Indiscretion of the present Ministers of this way: Their want of Learning, Prudence, and other good Parts, that may fit them to manage so great a Trust, as is the Government of the Church. *Ans.* We know these are the diminutive thoughts that our Adversaries have of us: And we have not such high Thoughts of our selves, as to magnifie our selves: We have cause to be humbled, (as we hope we are, in some measure) for our imperfections both in Gifts and Graces: Yet we may, and must (being thus put to it) say, that there want not Men amongst us, who fall not short of Ministerial Qualifications, of them who have lately had the Rule of the Church; and for the generality of us, it is the Opinion of the World, and of unbiassed Men; (yea, even of some, that are not of our way) that these of the other party have no cause in their Glorifying over us in this. 2. Church Government doth not require any great degree of Politick Accomplishment: A plain man who understandeth the Laws of Christ, and the Scripture Directions concerning Censures, is fitter to Govern the Church, than a great States-man is. 3. Any Indiscretion that of late years hath appeared in our Conduct, may and should be imputed to our want of liberty to govern the Church; every one (among Ministers and People) did what was right in his own Eyes; and we do not deny, but there are some Indiscreet Persons among us, as there are in all Parties: And even wise Men in our Circumstances, could not shun some Acts that might seem Indiscreet, either to Adversaries, or to less considering Persons.

6. The Divisions of *Presbyterians* are objected. *Ans.* 1. Where are these not to be found? Neither Bishop nor Pope have been able to keep them out of the Church, or from among their own Party. 2. Our Divisions we do not deny, or approve; we are Men of like Passions with others: we labour to shun Divisions as much as is possible, and through Grace, are come to more Unity than they who reproach us with Divisions.

3. The Divisions that were among us, as we de-

ny not that our Mistakes and Corruptions had a hand in them, so we know that Enemies were active to promote and heighten them: Which though it excuse not us *a toto*, yet it doth *a tanto*, and puts our Enemies in *mala fide*, to reproach us with them. 4. The Unity that the Prelatic party made in the Church, was like that of a Conquering Tyrant, who beholdeth all those that oppose him, slain before him; there was Peace to the King and *Haman*, when there was none to the People of God; the Unity of some, is a Combination in Error, and the result of a Conquest over Mens Consciences, that now dare not mutter against the Lust of their imposing Task-masters: We think contending for Truth, more desirable than such Peace. It is known that our Church enjoyed such Unity for many years after the Reformation as was Celebrated by Churches Abroad, as is evident from the Preface to *Corpus Confessionum*, till ambitious men began to trouble her with their Innovations, and Usurpations, and so were the cause of Division.

7. Many Object, that if *Presbyterians* get Power, they will force all to make publick Repentance who have owned *Bishops*, taken the *Test*, or other Oaths that they dislike. *Ans.* Our principle is that, that publick Scandals ought to be publicly rebuked; yet there are Cases in which the strictness of Discipline in this matter, may and must be relaxed: I shall name two. 1. When the matter of Offence is controverted, and the sinful Practice is from the mis-information of the Conscience; where the matter is not of the highest moment, and the Person appeareth Conscieniously to follow his Light, Church Discipline may then be forborn. 2. When the fault is universal, either the whole, or the greater part, or great part of the Church is guilty; the rigour of Censure (that otherwise might be due) is to be abated; even the Primitive Church, though very severe in Discipline, used a great *Evangelia* in this case: When many or most had fallen in Persecution; though the Crime was of the highest nature, even denying the Faith. A general Humiliation of the whole Church, may be instead of a particular application of Censures; I hope there is no cause of fear from men of such moderate Principles. If in this or any thing else, we have been chargable with Excess, as who can clear himself from all blame, I hope our ripe Thoughts, Studies, and Sufferings, (by the Blessing of God on them) hath taught us, and will engage us, to let our Moderation be known to all Men; considering that the Lord is at hand:



and though we have been severely Beaten by our Fellow-Servants, yet we will stand in awe, and the loath that the Lord, when he cometh, should find us so doing to them.

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ants who are like to continue long in that Place; yet there may be a middle sort who cannot be determined by General Rules, but it must be left to the Prudence of the Church to judge in this. If these things be duly considered, Great Men need not fear having a Minister obtruded on them; especially if we add, that Men of Interest usually are able to influence those that live under them, or that depend upon them. 4. In the times where-in Patronages were taken away by Law, Men of Interest and Respect found no cause to complain of being imposed upon, but the Church laid down such directions (as may be seen in the Acts of the General Assembly August 4, 1649. Sess. 40.) And the constant Practice of the Church was to give such deference to them, as they were generally satisfied with their Elections: And they may still be persuaded that it will be the care of *Elderships* and *Presbyteries* to do nothing that they can justly complain of. Besides that, it may be presumed that no Minister, who regardeth his being useful, or his own Peace and Comfort, will enter into a place with the dislike of any considerable part of the People, either for Number or Quality. If it be objected that there were great Divisions and Tumults about Elections, in and about the Year 1650. *Ans.* 1. So there were in the Primitive Church, which the *Advocates* for Patronages use as an Argument against our Opinion; and yet the Church did not think of such a Remedy as putting the Election into the hand of one single Person, nor of taking it from the People. 2. At the time mentioned there was a lamentable Schism in the Church about other matters; and therefore it was no wonder it appeared in this matter also; People were for choosing Ministers that were of the same Sentiment with them about the things then in Controversie, and the Schism was Indultriously kept up and promoted, by the Rulers that then had Enslaved this Nation by force of Arms, and made use of our Factions to wreath their Yoke on our Necks. It is a wide consequence to infer from this, that the privilege of choosing their own Pastors should alwise be taken from the People of God. 3. When Divisions appear in this matter, the Controversie is to be decided by the Session, or Presbytery Synod, or General Assemblies; and if it amount to the breach of Peace, the Magistrate is to interpose his Authority. These are the proper Remedies of such Divisions, and not to deprive both Parties of that which is their Right and Christ's Grant to them, because they cannot agree about it. It were a strange way of compoling

Civil Contentings about *Meum* and *Tuum*, if that which they contend about should be taken from both, and given to a third Person; the better way is the Judge competent is to decide in favour of him who is found to have the best Right, (if Arbitrators cannot compromise the matter.) So it is here.

Another Objection, (the 10) is concerning a Question that ariseth from the present Circumstances of this Church, under which it is judged necessary that the Government of the Church should be in its first Settlement in the hands only of them who are known to be truly Presbyterian. Before we consider what is objected against this it may be needful to lay down the Case, and the grounds of the necessity of what we desire, resulting from it. It is then to be considered, That the Church of Scotland hath almost ever been Presbyterian: It received that Government with Christianity, and retained it while Anti-christian Doctrine and Government prevailed in other parts as hath been of late made appear. And after it had been overrun by *Papery*, it was Reformed by *Presbyters*. And that Government as it is founded in Scripture, so it hath continued in this Church ever since the Reformation, save that it had some short interruption, which did always breed disquiet in the minds of people, and troubles in the Nation, and Sufferings to some of the most Sober and best of the Ministers and people. And when in the Year 1662. that Government was suppressed, and Prelacy set up by an Act of Parliament, this deed was never consented to by the National Church, but *Presbytery* as it had been settled by the Authority of the Church and State, so continued, and doth continue settled by the Authority of the Church: Whence it may rationally be deduced, that the Ministers that entered by and under Prelacy, neither had nor have any right to be Rulers in the Presbyterian Church; they have had no Call nor Authority from her, (whatever they might have in another Church that the State set up in the Nation beside the Church that then was in Being, from which a great Body of Ministers and people did dissent, which Authority they were never suffered to exercise even in their own Church.) It is also to be considered, that on this happy Revolution the King and Parliament have been pleased to Abolish Prelacy; and have declared their Resolution by their Authority to settle Presbyterian Government. From this it followeth that the Prelatical Clergy should not be admitted to a share in the Government; except such of them as shall by a  
Presbyterian

Presbyterian Church be found qualified for the Ministry, and such from whom there is no hazard of overturning that Government that now is intended to be Established; for they being more in number than the *Presbyterians*, is it to be imagined that *Presbyterian* Government can be safe in their Hands, or that they will not erect a Prelacy in the Church, or something instead of it, or some way that is inconsistent with *Presbytery* in its Purity? And there being many among them known to be Insufficient, Scandalous, or Erroneous, it is not possible that the Church can be purged of such, if they have the Government, but rather there is an hazard that the best Men should be cast out, and that by Church Authority, lest they should stand in the way of their Designs. Wherefore, as they have no just Right to such power, so necessity (which *quicquid coegit, defendit*) doth barr their exercise of such power in the present juncture. Mean while *Presbyterians* do declare, that they do not desire that all these Men should be restrained from the Parochial exercise of their Ministry. And that whoever among them (as soon as the Church can be in case to purge her self) is not proved to be Insufficient, Scandalous, or extremely negligent, shall be cordially received into her Society, and have the full Exercise of their Ministry, and that their contempered Scandals cannot be charged on them; none shall be dealt with as Scandalous, because of their having had a hand in this late publick Defection.

These things thus laid down, let us hear what is objected against this course. 1<sup>st</sup>. This is to set up Prelacy among Ministers, even while it is so much decry'd, that a few should have Rule of the Churches, and the rest Exclude. *Ans.* It is no Prelacy, but a making distinction among Ministers of one Society, and these of another: Though they be Ministers, yet they are not Ministers of the *Presbyterian Church*, they have departed from it; we have continued in the good old way that they and we professed: It is not then unreasonable, that if they will return to that Society, they should be admitted by it, and not be imposed on it. At the Reformation from *Papery*, was it a Prelacy in the few *Protestant Ministers*, that they were not willing to let the *Papish Priests* Govern the Church? Or did *Nehemiah* and the *Jews* pretend to any power over *Tobiah Sanballat*, and their party, that they would not suffer them to Build with them? Pardon these Comparisons, they are not intended to parallel with our Brethren with either of these sorts

of Men, except in this, that they are not of the *Presbyterian Church*, more than those others were of the *Protestant*, or *Jewish Church*; and that there is hazard from them to our way, as well as there was from the other to their ways.

*Obj.* 2. By this means the lesser party in the Church of *Scotland*, shall Exclude the greater from the Government. *Ans.* This is not absurd, where the greater party have left the Church they were of; and the lesser hath abode in it, or rather are left as the constitute Members of it. And when that greater party hath set up another frame of a Church which they are now forced to part with, when they would return to the former way, they cannot Incorporate again with them who abode in it, without their consent, especially where this consent is ready to be given on any tolerable Security for the way that the lesser party doth own, and the other departed from.

*Obj.* 3. What warrant is there for leaving to these Men the Parochial Exercise of their Ministry, and to deprive them of the other part of it; seeing the exercise of the Ministry in Teaching and Ruling is *Quid Indivisum*. *Ans.* There are two Reasons for this; one is the necessity of the Church, which for such a critical *interim* as our lot is fallen into, may warrant that, which out of such an exigence, and for a constant continuance in the Church were unwarrantable: It is necessary on the one hand, that the Parishes be not deprived of their Labours, lest a great part of the Country should be destitute of all Gospel Ordinances. It is as necessary on the other hand, that they have not Ruling power in the Church with the *Presbyterians*, lest that Government which Christ hath Instituted, and which is designed to be Settled, be overturned: And we know that many things may be done in *curbato Statu Ecclesie*, (such as we now are in) which ought to be allowed in *paccato Ecclesia Statu*. Another Reason is, we do neither deny their Teaching, nor their Ruling power; yet Teaching being common to the one Church way with the other, we may well allow them the exercise of that among us, while Ruling being different in their way and ours, and the principle that they hold in it being everfive of our way, it is rational to deny them a share among us. Not to insist on farther Objections, whatever inconveniencies may seem to follow on this conduct, may be answered by force of Necessity already held forth, and objected by the speedy settling the Church upon its right Basis.